

## **MITFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

The digital Annual Parish Council Meeting was held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 19 May 2021

Present:

Parish Councillors Mrs Sheena Hudson, Mrs Esther Ridley, Ted Rodger, Mike Sharp, Matt Skillen and Mrs Alison Young

Stephen Rickitt – Clerk

### 1: Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Cllr Sharp was elected as the Chairman and Cllr Mrs Young as Vice-Chairman. Cllr Sharp indicated his intention to stand down as Chairman in 2022.

### 2: Public Participation

No parishioners were present nor had any questions been emailed to the clerk.

### 3: Apologies for Absence

County Cllr Glen Sanderson and PC Andrea Teasdale had presented their apologies.

### 4: Declarations and Grant of Dispensations

4.1 Cllr Mrs Ridley declared her membership of the village hall committee.

4.2 All Parish Councillors took the opportunity to sign their declarations of acceptance of office in the presence of the clerk.

4.3 The Council resolved to grant a dispensation under section 33 Localism Act 2011 to allow any parish councillor to remain, speak and vote on any issue relating to an organization on which a parish councillor was the Council's representative. This dispensation will be effective until the next scheduled elections in May 2025. The reason is to allow the proper discussion of matters affecting community organisations.

### 5: Coronavirus

Councillors were not aware of any new issues affecting parishioners.

### 6: Report from the Beat Manager

6.1 PC Teasdale had sent the following report:

We are having problems with off road bikers in the area – mainly at the weekend. We are working with other agencies to address this issue as it is a national problem, and a lot of the riders are legally allowed on certain areas which creates the problem for us to deal with it.

There are also on-going poaching issues, but some cars have been seized by Police when they have been stopped or abandoned following reports of poaching in the area. Please report any issues with off-road bikes or poachers to police via 101 or the website as you can submit a web submission.

As the lockdown continues to be eased we are hoping there will not be too many issues and most people have stuck to the guidelines to date. If there are any specific breaches you can report them via 101 or a web submission and these will be looked into.

6.2 Councillors discussed the issue of recreational motorists using Byways. It was reported that the police are using a form of ASBO to seize offending vehicles. Praise was given to the Rural Crime Team. The clerk will see if the Team could come to a future meeting. **Action SER**

#### 7: Report from the County Councillor

Cllr Sanderson had presented his apologies. The Council noted his re-election for the division at the recent County Council elections.

#### 8: Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2021

These were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chairman.

#### 9: Any Matters Arising from the Minutes

##### A new Seat

9.1 The clerk showed a hardwood three seat bench seat of the type proposed for Fontside. The cost would be over £1000 (not including VAT) from a recognized supplier. Cllr Mrs Hudson will approach a local joiner to see if he is prepared to give a quotation. **Action SH**

##### The main noticeboard

9.2 Cllr Skillen and the Village Warden had inspected the noticeboard and a few repairs are required. The Warden will carry these out when the weather has improved.

#### 10: Planning

10.1 The clerk had circulated *Planning Consultation 21/01553/FELTPO Fenwick Toft 4 East Edington Farm - application to remove T10 Lime and T11 Ash* – Cllr Mrs Ridley will visit the site to seek visual confirmation that the trees are not being removed for aesthetic reasons. If removal seems necessary, the Council agreed to raise no objection provided replacements trees were planted. **Action ER**

10.2 The clerk will chase up the requested information relating to the NI Golf Range. **Action SER**

10.3 The clerk drew attention to the inclusion of a Planning Bill within The Queen's Speech. He anticipated that NALC would be informing Member Councils as and when more details is to hand.

#### 11: Environmental Matters

##### Riverbank Erosion

11.1 The willow whips have now been planted at the riverbank. The warden will make weekly visits to ensure that the whips can establish.

11.2 Cllr Sharp will contact the Environment Agency to discuss the use of live-willow pilings and to seek their confirmation that no crayfish management work will be required if such pilings are used. Cllr Sharp will also take the opportunity to see if the Agency have any local experience of this type of embankment protection and whether there are any local contractors who could be approached for a quotation. **Action MSh**

11.3 Cllr Skillen agreed to make soundings to see if there are any sources of funding for this work. **Action MSk**

#### Dog Fouling

11.4 Councillors and Parishioners had complained about the increase in the amount of dog faeces and discarded poo-bags around the parish. Noting that the real problem was the handful of irresponsible owners, the Council agreed to ask the clerk to investigate whether the County Council would empty further waste bins if these were provided by the Parish Council. Once that was known, the Council will purchase either general waste bins or specific dog waste bins for beneath the A1 flyover and by the post box in Tranwell Woods. The clerk was given authority to arrange for the purchase of two bins once the County Council's response was known and details had been circulated to Councillors. **Action SER**

#### Parking on the Village Greens at Fontside

11.5 There was considerable discussion about vehicles parking on the Greens, an issue which had arisen when a community group had left cars there. [The group has since apologised and made alternative arrangements to park at the Cricket Club] Points made during the discussion included

- If formal restrictions were put in place, how would they be enforced
- The growth in multi-car households in an estate designed in the 1950s when car ownership was far less than at present
- The small capacity of the village hall car park but the need to allow users of the hall to park
- The lack of a suitable alternative site within the village, recognising the distances from the parking by the Church or along the Morpeth Road.

11.6 The Council conclude that the best which could be done at the present time was a sign requesting that vehicles do not park on the Greens.

11.7 The clerk was authorised to order a sign from a local contractor once details of a quotation had been circulated to Councillors. **Action SER**

### 12: Highways

#### Equestrian Safety

12.1 Cllr Mrs Hudson had drawn attention to the problems faced by riders from the Pegasus Centre who have ceased riding on the roads. Councillors recognised that the problems in Tranwell Village may be contractors from the St. Mary's site and the Chairman will visit the site to speak to the site manager. In Tranwell Woods the problems seem to be the home delivery vans. The clerk will chase up the County Council for a discussion on safety work, the deployment of the speed camera van and the results of the speed surveys. **Action MSh & SER**

#### The Morpeth Road

12.2 Councillors asked that the County Council be asked to replace the warning signs and road markings on the Mitford Road passing the Abbey Mills community as traffic was speeding along causing potential hazards to walker, riders, cyclists and other motorists. **Action SER**

### Water at the Spital Hill Junction

12.3 Cllr Sharp will contact Martin King to ensure the County Council are pressing NWL and Openreach to repair their apparatus. Cllr Mrs Young reported that she had contacted Openreach who had sent an engineer to investigate. This seems to have potentially started work by Openreach. Cllr Mrs Young will do a briefing note to send to Martin King. **Action MSh & AY**

### Village Gateways

12.4 The clerk reported a reluctance by the Highways Dept to have a site meeting to discuss the locations for Gateway features. The clerk will endeavour to set up a meeting in July, failing which the Council will take video footage of potential locations for dispatch to County Hall in an effort to make progress. **Action SER**

12.5 The Council was pleased by the progress on installing the speed limit on Spital Hill and asked the clerk to seek an estimated date for the installation of the speed indicator sign. **Action SER**

### 13: Fibre Broadband

ALNCOM are progressing work, with a significant number of households already connected. The Hall should have a connection soon. Councillors were pleased to see the amount of activity in delivering this upgraded facility.

### 14: The Website

Cllr Mrs Young will be meeting Widescope to discuss modernising the appearance of the site and will be seeking updated content from community groups. **Action AY**

### 15: The Village Warden

Cllr Skillen reminded Councillors to let him know of any work for the warden. **Action All Cllrs**

### 16: The Village Hall

Cllr Mrs Ridley reported that bookings were increasing. The clerk offered to host a Zoom meeting of the Hall Committee if required. **Action ER**

### 17: Financial Matters

17.1 The Council approved the following payments:

- NALC – Annual Subscription - £134.76
- Cllr Sharp – reimbursement for the purchase of the willow whips - £105.95 - retrospective
- P Vermaas – Internal Audit Fee - £45.00
- Gavin Christie – Village Warden - £324.00 (March and April 2021)

17.2 The Council considered the Risk Assessment and the Assets Register and concluded that no amendments were required. [Copies are attached to the signed minutes]

18. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/2021

18.1 The Council noted that the internal auditor’s report. [A copy is attached to the signed minutes]

18.2 The Council approved the Annual Governance Statement. [A copy of the draft is attached to the signed minutes]

18.3 The Council approved the draft annual accounts for 2020/2021 [A copy of the draft is attached to the signed minutes]

18.4 The Council approved the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances [Copies of the drafts are attached to the signed minutes]

18.5 The Council confirmed and approved the Certification of Exemption [A copy of the draft is attached to the signed minutes]

19: The General Power of Competence

On consideration of a report from the clerk, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, the Council resolved that they satisfy the requirements and adopted the General Power of Competence.

20: Correspondence

The clerk reported there were no substantive items which had not been distributed to Councillors.

21: Any other business

None, not raised elsewhere

22: Time and date of next meeting

Meetings are provisionally scheduled for the first Wednesday every month.

The next scheduled meeting is on Thursday 8 July 2021 at 7.30 pm as the Council hopes to use the Main Room in the Village Hall as a hybrid meeting.

Further possible meetings are scheduled for

- 1 September 2021
- 6 October 2021
- 3 November 2021
- 1 December 2021

Confirmed as a true record

and signed by the Chairman ..... Date .....